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MOROCCO · AND · ARMAGEDDON

BY · E. D. MOREL *
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FROM — WHO IS WHO — ENGLISH EDITION · 1915 —
MOREL, EDMUND D.

HON. SECRETARY CONGO REFORM ASSOCIATION ★
EDITOR · AFRICAN · MAIL ★ BORN · JULY · 10—1873 ★
SON · OF · EDMUND · MOREL-DE-VILLE · AND · EMELINE
DE · HORNE ★ AUTHOR · AND · JOURNALIST ★ FOUNDED
CONGO · REFORM · ASSOCIATION ★ TOOK · LEADING
PART · IN · MOVEMENT · AGAINST · CONGO · MISRULE ★
PUBLICATIONS:—AFFAIRS · OF · WEST · AFRICA ★ THE
BRITISH · CASE · IN · FRENCH · CONGO ★ KING · LEOPOLD'S
RULE · IN · AFRICA ★ RED · RUBBER ★ GREAT · BRITAIN
AND · THE · CONGO ★ NIGERIA ★ MOROCCO · IN · DIPLOM-
ACY [POPULAR EDITION: TEN · YEARS · OF · SECRET
DIPLOMACY] ★

FORWORD

RATHER late in the day, the part played by the triangular Anglo-Franco-German quarrel over Morocco in bringing about the cataclysm which has overwhelmed Civilisation is seen to have been of capital importance.

The 1913 despatches from the French Ambassador and *Chargé d'Affaires* at Berlin published in the *French Yellow Book* on the war, as a sort of introduction to the documents registering the events of last July and August, place this truth in bold relief.

Produced with the apparent object of showing that the rulers of Germany intended to provoke war more than a year before it actually broke out, these despatches prove in the clearest way two things:—

First, that the way in which Germany was treated by Anglo-French diplomacy over the Morocco affair had aroused among all classes in Germany a profound resentment;

Secondly, that if peace was kept at that time it was due to the personality of the Emperor and to his influence over German statesmen.*

Both the Emperor and the German Government had incurred unpopularity by their attitude. "Public opinion," writes the French Military *Attaché*† "has forgiven neither them nor us (*i. e.*, the French). People are determined that such a thing shall never happen again." Elsewhere in this despatch the writer expresses the fear lest "the moderation of the Imperial Government will, perhaps, be powerless" to resist the consequences of a further wound to the "national vanity." The Morocco affair, we are told, in effect by the French Minister in Bavaria, had left upon the German mind the impression that the Imperial Chancellery was incapable of making itself respected abroad.§ We find the French Ambassador§ reporting that German public opinion believes itself to have suffered "a national humiliation, a lowering in the eyes of Europe, a blow to German prestige," the German Foreign Secretary was "the best hated man in Germany." The Emperor's admittedly pacific intentions are stated, in the alleged conversation recorded by the French Ambassador,¶ to have become affected.

* No. 1, No. 5, No. 6, Cd. 7717.

† No. 1, Encl. 1, Cd. 7717.

‡ No. 4 *id.*

§ No. 5 *id.*

¶ No. 6. The despatch transmits an alleged conversation between King Albert, the Emperor, and General Moltke which took place at the beginning of November, 1913. General von Moltke has since denied that the Emperor was present and also the accuracy of the report itself.

I find a melancholy satisfaction in recalling that I stood, almost alone, at that period in endeavouring to persuade Parliament and the nation that, failing a searching and public discussion of the events of the summer and autumn of 1911, in which the conduct of our diplomacy throughout the Morocco business and the precise character of our diplomatic relations with France, should be tested in the light of accessible documents and forced into the open, an Anglo-German collision was inevitable and speedy.*

The Morocco quarrel will, by future generations of English-speaking people, be regarded as one of those episodes in a nation's history which leave indelible traces upon its destinies, forging links of inter-connected circumstances affecting a remote posterity.

It marked a definite breach in the friendship of Anglo-Teuton officialdom, which, with occasional periods of temporary friction, had endured for nigh upon one thousand years, and which in the last two hundred years had given to the British Empire, amongst other things, a line of kings of German stock.

It marked the inauguration of the policy of secret military and naval understandings with France and Russia which, however it may have been regarded on the British official side, was in fact, and so far as the other partners to it were concerned, a policy deliberately hostile to the Germanic Powers.

Too great an emphasis cannot be laid upon this point. The secret Anglo-French military "conversations"; or, in other words, the Anglo-French military plan of campaign on the Continent in the event of a general European war, and the Anglo-French naval arrangement, *had their origin in the Morocco quarrel*. British foreign policy was committed without the nation's knowing to what, personally, I consider to have been the utterly insane adventure of identifying the national interests with the "revanche" and with the "colonial" sections of French official life, and, therefore, by a fatal sequence, with the Imperialistic Bureaucracy of Russia; *through the Morocco quarrel*.

How swift has been the Nemesis of Europe's callous treatment of Morocco. The Moorish State was what in European terminology is described as a "barbarous" or "semi-barbarous" State, situate in North Africa, inhabited by some eight million people of Berber stock. From the European point of view it required "reforming"; and that point of view contained this amount of truth, that administrative and financial reforms *had* become essential in Morocco, if Morocco was to survive the shock of intimate contact with the reckless expansionism of modern enterprise and with the speculative and financial element in modern commercialism. But if the Governments of Europe had been honest they could have assisted the Moorish State to introduce those changes and modifications in its administration

* A cheap edition of the book treating the whole story which I wrote in 1912 is now accessible: "Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy: An Unbeeded Warning." (The National Labour Press, price 1/-.)

which had become indispensable for the preservation of its independence. If their repeated professions had been sincere they could have collaborated in helping the Moors to put their house in order. They could, with very little difficulty, with hardly any expense, have really contributed to build up that "regenerated Morocco" which they hypocritically declared themselves to be desirous of evolving. But they were not sincere. For the diplomatists of Europe, Morocco and the Moors were merely pawns in the intrigues and rivalries which make up the life of the European diplomatic world.

And so, what happened was this. With a calculated cruelty and perfidy which have seldom been exceeded in the record of European diplomacy, the rulers of Morocco were bullied, tricked, exploited, led on to borrow large sums at a usurious interest, mulcted in preposterous claims for compensation on the least provocation. Little by little, European finance dug its grip into Morocco's entrails until all national sources of revenue were hypothecated to pay interest to European bondholders. First one piece of territory was filched; then another. The authority of the Sultan was systematically undermined. Quarrels were forced upon the unhappy country on every possible occasion. Thousands upon thousands of Moors were slain. Their land was extorted and wrested from them by scandalous transactions, both financial and political. Finally, Morocco sank into bloody chaos. Its independence and integrity disappeared. It became a French Protectorate, in defiance of solemn Treaty obligations.

But note the sequel. That result was not obtained without bitter international friction. On the one side French officialdom (I will not write France, for to speak of "France" in this matter is as untrue as to speak of "England" in connection with the betrayal of Persia—the *people* are not responsible for these odious things), supported to the uttermost by British officialdom, had, for years, with incessant pertinacity, worked to destroy an International Agreement guaranteeing the independence and integrity of Morocco, which both Governments were pledged to uphold. German officialdom had striven no less energetically to prevent that Agreement, to which the German Government was also a signee, from being destroyed, not from any high altruistic motive, but for the following reasons. Because destruction of that Agreement meant the absorption of Morocco by France and the assured strangulation of all non-French enterprise in a country in which German economic interests were actually and potentially important. Because Germany had acquired a political *status* in regard to the future of Morocco, as a signee to two international Agreements concerned with that country, which she could not allow to be contemptuously thrust aside, merely because France and England had come to a private understanding.

In the final phases of this struggle, friction had become intensified to such a degree that war between France and England on the one side, and Germany on the other, had almost resulted.

We are told to-day in the French Yellow Book that the pacific disposition of the German Emperor and his Chancellor was one of the most powerful factors in restraining German feeling. But the attitude of British officialdom, of the British Tory Press headed by the *Times*, and, more than anything else, the speech delivered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the Mansion House, had worked incalculable and enduring mischief to Anglo-German relations, in Germany. Judged from the standpoint of international ethics, Germany's *case* in the Morocco affair was based upon the preservation of the Public Law of Europe; upon the preservation of the *international* character of a problem proclaimed to be international in 1880 and again in 1906. The way in which the British Foreign Office swept aside both Germany's *international* position and her national interests in Morocco, which were concerned in standing out against the French claims, and interfered threateningly in defence of the French in what was intrinsically a Franco-German dispute caused the utmost *popular* resentment in Germany.

The Moors have lost their independence and their country. But, if it be any satisfaction to them, they have their revenge. For the legacy of international ill-will to which their treatment gave rise must count as one of the most powerful of the originating causes of a war which finds Britain and Germany at one another's throats.

MOROCCO AND ARMAGEDDON

THE FIRST PERIOD.

The story of Morocco as it affects the review of international affairs which this series of pamphlets is intended to cover, may be divided into three periods. The first period extends from 1880 to 1903; beginning with the Madrid Convention of 1881. The Convention is a landmark in Moorish history because Morocco emerged from the Madrid Conference, a problem recognised by the Powers as a problem of *international character*. The Conference was concerned with the *status* of Europeans and of European trade in Morocco.

At the instance of Germany—in which she was supported by England—the Madrid Convention placed the trade of all nations on an equal footing in Morocco.*

At that moment, precedently, and until 1903, the policy pursued by the British and German Governments was that of maintaining the independence and integrity of Morocco. Both Governments desired the “open door” for trade in Morocco, and the British Government was resolutely opposed to France acquiring the Mediterranean seaboard of Morocco. British policy towards Morocco was laid down in Lord Salisbury’s famous despatch to Sir C. Euan Smith in 1891.†

The policy of the French Government was wholly different. Though doing lip service to the principle of independence and integrity of Morocco, the French Government and the French Administration of Algeria (which played a very important part in Franco-Moroccan relations) was determined upon its conquest and absorption, and steadily worked for that end over a long course of years. An aggressive Imperialism and hostility towards England were the inspiring motives of this policy. They became incarnate and active under the direction of M. Delcassé, who was Foreign Minister in 1898 when France and England were brought to the verge of war over the Fashoda incident. Fashoda was followed by the Boer war, and M. Delcassé thought his chance had come. In 1901 he made an agreement with Italy whereby he undertook that France would not interfere with the exercise of Italian “claims” in Tripoli, the Italian Government

* Previously Britain and France alone benefited by the “most favoured nation treatment.”

† C. 6815. All documents and facts referred to in these footnotes are either quoted from or dealt with at length in “Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy.”

undertaking a similar self-denying ordinance with regard to French "claims" in Morocco. Having squared Italy, M. Delcassé then turned to Spain, which had had sentimental and traditional interests with Morocco for many centuries, and made a secret proposal to the Spanish Government that France and Spain should divide Morocco between them. The projected partition gave France a substantial portion of the Mediterranean seaboard. The matter was debated between the French and Spanish Foreign Offices all through the year 1902.* Then the British Government heard of it and put pressure upon Spain with the result that the Spanish Government declined at the last moment to ratify the arrangement and broke off negotiations.

SECOND PERIOD.

The second period of Morocco's entanglement in the meshes of European diplomacy opens with the conclusion of a series of Anglo-French Agreements removing both old and recent causes of friction between the two Governments. The period concludes with the Act of Algeciras (June, 1906). It is notable for the first German intervention in Morocco against France and for the embitterment of Anglo-German relations which ensued.

The series of Agreements with France covered disputes over the Newfoundland Fisheries, West African boundaries, Siam, Madagascar, the New Hebrides and Egypt. Friends of peace in both countries welcomed the close of Anglo-French bickering over matters remote from the *national* interests of the French and British peoples; but to which the diplomatists had attached importance and which had perpetuated a purely artificial ill-feeling between the two countries. Alone among these Agreements, that concerning Egypt was, as it were, double-barrelled. The French Government had undertaken to abandon its policy of "pin-pricks" against us in Egypt, and acquired from us in exchange an official recognition of special French interests in Morocco. The pertinent paragraph in the Agreement read as follows:

His Britannic Majesty's Government, for their part, recognize that it appertains to France more particularly, as a Power whose dominions are coterminous for a great distance with those of Morocco, to preserve order in that country, and to provide assistance for the purpose of any administrative, economic, financial, and military reforms which it may require.

The significance which might otherwise have attached to that paragraph was considerably minimised by the preceding paragraph, which read as follows:

The Government of the French Republic declare that they have *no intention of altering the political status of Morocco.*

That, at any rate, was clear enough.

* It has been asserted, although I have never been able to find anything in the nature of real proof, that M. Delcassé also approached Germany at least tentatively on the subject, and met with a rebuff.

The German Government appears to have interpreted it literally. The Agreement was signed on April 6 (1904). Questioned in the Reichstag on April 12, the German Chancellor (Prince Bülow) replied that he had no reason to believe the Agreement—of which he said he had had no official notification—to be directed against Germany. He added:

Our interests therein (Morocco) are, before all, commercial interests; also are we specially interested that calm and order should prevail in Morocco. We must protect our commercial interests, and we shall protect them. We have no reason to fear that they will be set aside or infringed by any Power.

These words have often been quoted in order, apparently, to establish that the German Government's subsequent change of attitude was Machiavellian and inspired by aggressive intentions towards France and England.

But Machiavellianism was not on the German side in this instance at any rate.

Behind the open and published Agreements there were secret ones, and those secret ones provided for the revival and the execution of the first Delcassé plan—the plan of a Franco-Spanish political and economic partition of Morocco: but, henceforth of a partition which would keep the Mediterranean sea-board of Morocco from falling into French hands. Lord Lansdowne saw to that.

The German Government was not aware of this fact when Bülow made his statement in the Reichstag on April 12, 1904. Indeed, the Franco-Spanish partition was only foreshadowed and provided for in the Secret Articles attached to the Anglo-French arrangement. *The Franco-Spanish partition Treaty was itself not signed until the ensuing October*, four months after Bülow's speech. Hints as to its true character were given out by Reuter's Agency and indiscreet French politicians. It was doubtless through these hints that the German Government got wind of the "plot." Possibly the German secret service filled in the details.* But, in point of fact, the actual text of both these secret arrangements was only revealed to the world *seven years later*—in November, 1911. Whether all the members of the then Unionist Cabinet and whether all the members of the Liberal Cabinet which succeeded it were in the secret, I do not know. But that M. Delcassé did not inform all *his* colleagues we have proof, because, when the secret arrangements were published in November, 1911, the Minister of Marine and the Colonial Minister, who were M. Delcassé's colleagues in 1904, declared in the French Chamber that they had had no knowledge of their existence until, like the ordinary man in the street, they had read them in the newspapers. So, as in another case which

* It should be added that German suspicions had been aroused before the public indiscretions attending the conclusion of the Franco-Spanish Treaty. M. Delcassé ostentatiously omitted officially to notify the German Government of the Anglo-French arrangement, contrary to the wishes of the French Ambassador in Berlin. This was a gratuitous slight, and was doubtless meant as such.

touches us even more nearly, a Foreign Minister is seen to be concluding agreements involving his nation without informing his colleagues.

For seven years the British (and the French) people were kept in ignorance of what had been done in their name, *and thus for seven years, it was possible for British and French officialdom to represent the action subsequently taken by the German Government as inexcusably hostile and aimed at driving a wedge between England and France*; whereas Germany had been humbugged and flouted and was protesting against the secret disposal of Morocco in the interests of France, Spain, and England.

No more unpardonable betrayal of the *public* interest; no more indefensible perversion of the public mind has taken place in our generation, and in the French Parliament, at least, the action of British and French diplomatists has been stigmatised as it deserved to be.* But our own Parliament was dumb.

In March, 1905, the Kaiser—acting upon his Chancellor's advice†—paid a visit to Tangier where he was met by the Sultan's representative to whom he declared that he looked upon the Sultan as an independent Sovereign and was determined to safeguard Germany's interests in Morocco. Simultaneously the German Government pressed for a further International Conference on the affairs of Morocco. The Foreign Offices of London and Paris were very angry and opposed the project of a Conference to the last. Indeed, both the British and French Governments began by informing the Sultan that they would not respond to his invitation. The temper of the British Foreign Office may be gauged by the *Times*, the ever-faithful thermometer of Downing Street temperature. A perusal of the issues of the *Times* from May to November, 1905, is enlightening. Its threats and insults to Germany, its abuse of the Emperor, are inconceivable. Germany's right to a voice in the Moroccan settlement is scornfully and violently denied. The idea of a Conference is derided. It would be a "humiliation," a "capitulation," *for England!*

The more disposed did the French become, as month succeeded month with tension ever growing more acute, to think better of their original refusal, the more did the *Times* fulminate in the opposite direction. After a while it became apparent that the whole of the French Cabinet had come round to the idea of a Conference except M. Delcassé, who felt that his personal prestige was at stake and who declined to give way. Finally he was compelled to. Indeed, the French Premier (M. Rouvier) began friendly "conversations" with Germany before his bellicose colleague left the Cabinet in June, 1906.

An account of what had transpired at the Cabinet meeting at which M. Delcassé tendered his resignation leaked out. It

* *Vide* "Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy." Extracts from the speeches of the Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, M. Ribot, and M. de Lamarzelle.

† "Imperial Germany." Prince Bülow (Cassel).

was published, and added fuel to the flames of German resentment, which the violence of the *Times*—believed all over the Continent to be the mouthpiece of the British Foreign Office—had occasioned. M. Delcassé—so ran the statement (which M. Delcassé, perhaps unjustly, was held to have inspired)—had informed his colleagues that if a rupture occurred between France and Germany, England would mobilise her Navy, seize the Kiel Canal, and land 100,000 men on the Continent. M. Delcassé improved the occasion by himself making an incendiary declaration to the *Gaulois* newspaper, the character of which may be estimated by its opening passage:

Of what importance would the young navy of Germany be in the event of war, in which England, I tell you, would assuredly be with us against Germany? What would become of Germany's ports, of her trade, of her mercantile marine? They would be annihilated.

Couple this sort of thing with the attitude of the *Times* and virtually all the British Tory Press, and ask yourselves whether the German contention that the German fleet is a *defensive* measure imposed upon Germany by circumstances, is not worthy of consideration? At any rate, it is not surprising that the German Navy Leaguers should have found in these utterances the best possible kind of fuel for their agitation in favour of a "strong navy."

Being forced to shed their protégée the *Times* and its satellites thereupon sought—and succeeded—in establishing the legend that the German Government had insisted upon M. Delcassé's fall, short of which it would have declared war upon France. The truth of the matter was obviously very different. M. Delcassé's colleagues—those who knew (if any did), and those who were unaware of the secret Treaties—agreed that M. Delcassé had treated Germany with cavalier discourtesy. They did not share his bellicosity. They thought the German demand for a Conference reasonable and internationally legal, and as their fiery associate would not modify his attitude, they got rid of him. Not a single colleague followed him in his retirement. The idea that the French Government would have shed M. Delcassé at the summons of the German Government shows an abysmal ignorance of the French character. The Frenchman is the worst possible person to threaten if you wish to make him reasonable.

The Conference was held at Algeciras, in February, 1906, and laid down in explicit terms the Public Law of Europe with regard to Morocco's future. The Act of the Conference was drawn up "In the name of God Almighty." It declared its provisions to be "based upon the threefold principle of the Sovereignty and independence of his Majesty the Sultan, the integrity of his dominion, and economic liberty without any inequality."

The only privileges that France obtained were the right—shared with Spain—to lend a certain number of Officers to a Moorish police force to keep order in a certain number of ports; that the regulations of the Act (as to customs, smuggling, etc.),

should be jointly administered by France and Morocco on the Algeria-Morocco frontier, and by Spain and Morocco on the Spanish-Moroccan frontier, and that a "Morocco State Bank" should be instituted as a limited liability company, registered by French Company Law and capitalised by the various Powers. In other words, the Algeciras Act gave to the Anglo-French *public* Agreement of 1904 the interpretation which Bülow had placed upon it in his speech in the Reichstag:

THIRD PERIOD.

The third episode dates from the morrow of Algeciras to the conclusion of the Franco-German Agreement of November, 1911, involving Germany's acquiescence in a French Protectorate over Morocco.

British statesmanship has seldom had such an opportunity of repairing an international breach as it had after Algeciras. With the Algeciras Conference a new chapter could have opened in Anglo-German-French relations. Sir Edward Grey was not responsible for the secret agreements. They were the work of Tory diplomacy. Internationally, Morocco was back again in the *status quo ante*. Germany had declined to be treated as a negligible factor in an *international* problem. It was quite clear that she intended to maintain that attitude in any development which the future might bring, and if her case was strong before, it was infinitely stronger after Algeciras because, thenceforth, it rested upon a detailed and published International Agreement. That was the cardinal fact in the situation. And this was the way of an easy and honourable escape from a false position. In the hands of a man of imagination and broad sympathies, it could have been handled with the happiest of consequences. There were two parties in French official life after Algeciras. One favoured a moderate and patient policy in regard to Morocco, leading to an eventual Protectorate, but a Protectorate established with German consent by corresponding compensations elsewhere, and by an economic *régime* in Morocco which would leave the economic field open to German enterprise on a basis of equality with other Powers, France included. The other—the Delcassé and Algerian School—desired to push things roughly and brutally forward, even at the cost of once more riding roughshod over Germany. By throwing its weight in the scale on the side of the moderates, the British Foreign Office would have been working for peace and reconciliation. It did the precise opposite. It identified itself from the first with the bellicose Imperialist party, and we have known (since August 3, 1914) that the Algeciras Conference was contemporaneous with the initiation of the Anglo-French military "conversations."

It has been argued that the German Government was not entitled to expect any compensation from France in the matter of Morocco. Let us examine the argument. What, in homely

language, was the proposition from the German point of view? At a given moment British and French diplomatists say to one another, "Let us have a general settlement." Agreed. "Cease your interminable worrying of us in Egypt—declares the British Foreign Office—and as far as we are concerned, you can—except as regards the Mediterranean sea-board—Spain must have that—do as you like in Morocco. Agreed, replies the French Foreign Office." But Morocco does not belong to France or Britain—it belongs to the Moors. Moreover, *all* the Powers have acquired a voice in its future, especially Germany, which has had official representatives at the Moorish Court for many years, which has received Embassies from, and signed Agreements with Morocco, which has a growing trade with it, has established therein a number of industrial enterprises, and looks for a considerable business development later on. But the French Foreign Office, having given Italy, Britain, and Spain a *quid pro quo*—three Powers with which it had to reckon—calmly ignores Germany. With the active concurrence of the British Foreign Office it proceeds to negotiate a paper partition of Morocco with Spain, according to which the whole of Morocco becomes French except the Mediterranean sea-board and one or two smaller districts on the Atlantic sea-board. Moreover, Article 10 provides that all economic "undertakings" throughout the entire area of Morocco "shall be executed" by France and Spain, which closes Morocco to free trade and ousts Germany from a potential market she has been cultivating for twenty years.

In other words, the French Government secretly proceeds to put Morocco in its pocket, politically and economically, and having bought British, Italian, and Spanish acquiescence, completely and ostentatiously ignores Germany!

It was an act of deliberate and *intended* provocation, if not on the part of the British Foreign Office, assuredly on the part of the French Foreign Office—unknown to the British and French peoples.

Any restraining influence in London after Algeiras must have been utterly lacking, because the Act of Algeiras, instead of marking a close time in Morocco, heralded an immediate recrudescence of French aggressive Imperialism; supported at every stage by the British Foreign Office. The capital Clauses of the Act were treated as waste paper. The policy embodied in the Secret Agreements was steadily pursued, as though no Algeiras Conference had been held at all.

The French began to seize slice after slice of Moorish territory, first on one pretext, then on another. Military occupation once begun, became permanent. German representations were met with promises of evacuation which were never fulfilled. French loans were literally forced upon the Sultan. Sedition was encouraged; anarchy assisted. The successive steps taken by the French Government to place Morocco at its mercy are

described in my book and I shall not recapitulate them here. One or two outstanding points of the 1906-1911 period must, however, be touched upon. Repeated attempts were made by the German Government to come to terms with France. French opinion continued to be divided as to how these overtures should be met, with the result that French policy was characterised by incessant vacillation, rendered still more unsatisfactory by the kaleidoscopic rapidity with which one ephemeral French Cabinet succeeded another.

In February, 1909, a Franco-German Agreement was signed, in which the German Government formally recognised special political French interests in Morocco, and proclaimed once more that its own interests in that country were purely economic, while the French Government again declared that it "remained firmly attached to the independence and integrity" of Morocco and was resolved to preserve therein the open door. In the course of that year, too, both Governments began a general discussion of Colonial questions affecting both countries, which was preparatory to a gradual acquiescence by Germany in the inevitability of an ultimate French Protectorate, subject to compensation in tropical Africa and a broad understanding tending to a permanent improvement in relations. These negotiations dragged out their weary length throughout 1910 until early in 1911. But it was impossible to come to any positive arrangement; owing to the causes above mentioned, and owing—there can be little doubt—to the jealous watchfulness of the anti-German elements in the British Foreign Office, which (as was made painfully apparent later on), were thoroughly averse to the idea of a general Franco-German accommodation. Anglo-German relations had again worsened through the German naval increase of 1907 and the dishonest naval scare of 1909 and articles kept on appearing in British newspapers and periodicals urging an Anglo-German war before the German fleet became too powerful. For a respectable presentment of that argument see Sir Edmund C. Cox's article in *The Nineteenth Century* for April, 1910.

Into the detail of these abortive negotiations, initiated by one French Government only to be dropped by its successor, I will not enter. Suffice it to say that the incoherence and exasperating tergiversations of French politicians were afterwards strongly denounced in the French Chamber, and justification for German irritation admitted.

All this time the French "forwards" were busily engaged in "working" up affairs in Morocco to the desired crisis. It came, in April, 1911. By this time, the Moorish Sultan had been deposed by his infuriated subjects who saw their country being gradually stolen from them. Another had taken his place. He in turn, deprived of all sources of revenue by the operations of French finance which had laid an embargo upon all public revenues; had driven his subjects to rebellion by exactions and

cruelties inflicted in the desperate attempt to raise the where-withal to support the internal mechanism of government. Moreover his advent had loosened in no way the French pincers. The whole country was in a state of effervescence. Fez was besieged by insurgents, and the Europeans within it were said to be in danger.* The supreme moment had arrived.

The French despatched a force of 30,000 men to the relief of Fez. They entered the capital with very little resistance and proceeded to occupy the surrounding country—despite their definite pledges to the contrary. Sir Edward Grey hastened to declare in the House that French action had his entire approval. It should be noted that right up to this moment the French Parliament had repeatedly placed on record by large majorities its invincible determination to abide by the Act of Algeciras. Such resolutions were voted on December 6th, 1906; November 12th, 1907; January 24th and 28th, 1908; June 29th, 1908; December 23rd, 1908; January 10th, 1909; November 23rd, 1909; and finally on March 24th, 1911. These resolutions expressed the wish of the French *Parliament*, which was undoubtedly pacific. But the Imperialists, militarists, and the jingoes were the stronger, for while the French Parliament said one thing, they *acted* in an entirely opposite sense.

With the occupation of Fez the independence and integrity of Morocco had vanished for good and all, and the Act of Algeciras had become waste paper. While the German Government was content to issue a formal warning to France that Germany, in view of these events, reserved full liberty of action, the Spanish Government, fearing to be cheated out of its share in the Secret Agreement (*still unknown to the world*) adopted drastic steps. It landed 40,000 troops on the Mediterranean sea-board and proceeded to occupy with a military force the districts of Larash and El-Kasr reserved to her under that Agreement. Thus had the original Secret bargain come to fruition. Thus was the "scrap of paper" consecrated to "Almighty God" summarily disposed of.

Germany waited until June to see if the French would keep their promise to evacuate Fez. Then she despatched a small gunboat of 1,000 tons burthen, with an equipment of 125 officers and men, to Moorish waters. In this manner did the German Government intimate once again as in 1905, that she declined to be treated with deliberate and contemptuous indifference.

When the Panther anchored off the so-called "Port" of Agadir on July, 1911, *over one hundred thousand French and Spanish troops were occupying Morocco*—Morocco had ceased to be anything but a name. Yet the act of Germany in sending her ridiculous little gunboat to anchor in a Moorish port was denounced in the British Press as a violation of the Act of Algeciras!

* This was afterwards denied, and the whole fiction exploded by French publicists.

If the issues had not been issues of life and death for millions of innocent people in England, France, and Germany, the whole episode might well have been described as Gilbertian. The despatch of the Panther was a signal for an outburst in the British Tory Press similar in all respects to that which greeted the Kaiser's visit to Tangier in 1905. The excitement manifested by the *Times*, the *Spectator*, and other organs inspired by certain elements in the Foreign Office, greatly exceeded the feeling displayed in France. In British official circles the action of the German Government was received with undisguised anger and was represented almost as a *casus belli*. In France such anger as was manifested was confined to certain groups. Outside those groups public opinion, and especially official opinion, was calm and restrained, and an underlying feeling prevailed that the Panther's arrival at Agadir was not to be interpreted as a hostile act or as an intimation that Germany intended seriously to dispute the French occupation of Morocco (which was an accomplished fact): but as a final intimation that long-protracted negotiations would have to be brought to a close and the issue settled once and for all.

Indeed, the difference in the British and French attitudes at that moment was extraordinary. The French Foreign Minister—*i. e.*, the Foreign Minister of the Power directly concerned and supposedly threatened by Germany's "brutal" act—went off to Holland with the President of the French Republic on an official visit, while the French Premier, M. Caillaux—who throughout worked steadily for peace—began a friendly conversation with the German Foreign Office through the French Ambassador. But the British Foreign Office was profoundly disturbed. Sir Edward Grey summoned the German Ambassador, told him that "a new situation had been created," and declared that the British Government could not recognise any new arrangement to which it was not a party! In short, at the very outset the British Foreign Office which had acquiesced in every step taken by the French since the Algeciras Act, whereby that "scrap of paper" had been torn up piece by piece, and which had publicly approved of the march on Fez, went out of its way to "father" the Franco-German dispute and adopted an ostensible bias against Germany. The *Times*, for its part, clamorously insisted upon Britain taking part in the Franco-German negotiations. The attempt to prevent a Franco-German *tete-a-tete* conversation was evinced in almost every issue of that paper. All the strings were pulled simultaneously: the same note was sounded by the *Times* correspondent in Berlin, by the *Times* correspondent in Paris, by the *Times* editorials. Every effort was made to convert this *Franco-German* affair into an *Anglo-German* affair. A desperate eagerness was displayed to convince the British public that Germany's "affront" was an affront to *us*: that Germany was threatening *us*. We were invited to be more French than the French.

If we assume—as one would naturally wish to do—that British diplomacy was peacefully disposed, the attitude taken up by the Foreign Office was utterly incomprehensible. Re-reading all the contemporary documents at this time, one is forced to the conclusion that a section of British official life was only terrified of one thing—a Franco-German *reapprochement*.

Meantime the Franco-German negotiations had begun in Berlin, and the world was subsequently to be apprised by the French Foreign Minister speaking in the French Chamber, that the German Government had opened the ball at once by agreeing to recognise a French Protectorate over Morocco—and in these words:—

Very well. We accept. Take Morocco, establish therein your Protectorate. But since you have made a Treaty with England in the matter, that you have made a Treaty with Italy, that you have made a Treaty with Spain, on what basis will you treat with us? Our public opinion will not permit that we should not obtain compensation elsewhere for our abandonment in your favour and the undertaking we shall give you that our diplomacy will assist in getting the Powers to ratify the arrangement we arrive at.

With these revelations—unhappily withheld until December (1911)—the edifice of untruth attributing to the German Government the intention of seizing Moroccan territory fell to the ground. And yet the statement that the German Government was working for a German Protectorate over Morocco continues to be made, just as though the French Government had not itself disposed of the whole story for good and all!

The Franco-German conversations then turned upon the “compensation” to be accorded to Germany. On the 16th July, as we learn from the French Yellow Book (published more than a year later) this point was definitely approached in an interview—thenceforth destined to be historic—between the German Foreign Secretary and the French Ambassador. In response to the latter’s request, the German Foreign Secretary replied that he only possessed “very vague ideas” as to the form the compensation should take. He sent for a map of Africa and indicated the portion of the French Congo between the Atlantic and the Sangha River (rather more than half the French Congo territory) *offering by way of exchange to make over to France the small but flourishing German West African Colony of Togo and a portion of the German Cameroons Colony*. The French Ambassador declared that France could not give up so large an area of the French Congo; whereupon the two practised debaters went over their respective “cases.” Finally, they adjourned the discussion apparently on quite friendly terms, and made an appointment to renew it a few days later.

While this was taking place in Berlin unknown, of course, to the British public, British official opinion was becoming more and more restless and “nervy.” Both France and Germany had

ignored Sir Edward Grey's demand to share in the discussion which, as we have seen, had opened. This was apparently a source of irritation, although Sir Edward Grey (or the permanent officials) must have known that the German Government had conceded the main French claim, because he afterwards told the House of Commons that the French Government had kept him regularly informed throughout.*

The scene shifts dramatically to London. A clever and unscrupulous intrigue was hatched—by whom and where constitutes as yet, and probably for ever will remain, a mystery. The Franco-German conversation on July 16 appeared, distorted and misrepresented in the *Times* of July 20, dated from Paris and headed “German Policy and *British* interests”: Note the *British*! The despatch alleged that Germany was “demanding impossible compensation” from France. The bargain proposed was “monstrously unfair.” What Germany was really aiming at was the acquisition of Agadir and its neighbourhood! This would compromise British interests. It would put a fatal strain upon the “*entente*.” But this did not exhaust the turpitude of the German Government. Suggestions had actually been made in German newspapers which “amount to nothing less than a general reconciliation of France and Germany on the basis of the unreserved opening of the French money markets for the benefit of the German national credit and German industrial enterprises at home and abroad.”

Such an idea was intolerable to the *Times* correspondent in Paris. The “political consequences of a settlement on this scale,” the despatch continues would be, “too far-reaching,” and “quite apart from the question of Anglo-French relations it would mean the death blow of the Russian Alliance!”

In other words, the *Times* correspondent in Paris looked upon a Franco-German reconciliation as an outrageous conception to be condemned. But why? Will the reader pause here for a moment and ask himself why the Paris correspondent of an English newspaper should, *of his own volition*, object to a 40 years' feud between two great nations being brought to a close? Can it be supposed for a moment that this correspondent was expressing his own views? Can the conclusion be resisted that the *Times* was used by the elements in the British diplomatic world, whose conceptions of the “Balance of Power” required that France and Germany should not become reconciled? And this the *Times* editorial of equal date made abundantly clear. The *Times* assailed the German Government in an article of incredible violence, which contained, moreover, an overt threat to France:

They (the Germans) must know equally well that no British Government could consent to suffer so great a change to be made in the distribution of power in Africa, even were a French Government to be found feeble enough to sanction it.

* It is, of course, possible that the French Ambassador in London withheld the information. But in that case Sir E. Grey's subsequent statement in the House was inaccurate.

It should be mentioned that the *Times* had added to its correspondent's list of charges against the German Government, the further charge of having demanded from France the reversion in Germany's favour of France's reversionary interest in the Congo Free State (Belgian Congo). There was not a word about this in the Paris despatch and, as subsequently transpired, the charge was quite untrue. Will the reader ask himself where the *Times* could have got that particular information!

The match had been laid to the powder magazine. It burnt for 24 hours. Then the explosion occurred. The next day—July 21st—Sir Edward Grey sent for the German Ambassador; told him that he had been “made anxious by the news which *appeared the day before*, as to the *demands* which the German Government had made on the French Government”; that these demands involved “a cession of the *French Congo*,” which it was “obviously impossible for the French Government to concede”; that if the negotiations were unsuccessful “a very embarrassing situation would arise”; that according to “native rumours” the Panther's people were landing and negotiating with the Tribes”^{*} and that it might be necessary “to take some steps to protect *British* interests.” The German Ambassador protested, and immediately telegraphed to his Government. The German Government's reply was in London on July 23rd. It contained a detailed denial, and a protest against the misreporting of an official conversation. But Sir Edward Grey did not wait for it. On the same day as his interview with the German Ambassador, *i.e.*, on July 21st, he communicated with the Prime Minister and with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but not with the Cabinet. That very evening Mr. Lloyd George made his notorious speech at the Mansion House, in the course of which he said:

I would make great sacrifices to preserve peace. . . . But if a situation were forced upon us in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Britain to be treated *where her interests were vitally affected as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of Nations*, then I say emphatically that peace at that price *would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure.*

When one looks back at that speech and considers the appalling mischief it provoked, one cannot trust oneself to say what one thinks about it.

I would only beg the reader to recapitulate the facts for himself. Five years before, the British Government had set its seal to a “scrap of paper”—the Algeciras Act—solemnly proclaiming the “independence and integrity” of Morocco; and from that date onwards had connived at and approved the systematic violation of that document by France, in accordance with a secret

^{*}Subsequently ascertained to have been untrue, and never, apparently, credited in France.

arrangement dated two years previously, and which the Algeciras Act had in effect invalidated. When Mr. Lloyd George made his speech, French troops to the number of about 80,000 were occupying the interior of Morocco, including the capital; and Spanish troops were occupying a large portion of the sea-board—once more in accordance with the secret arrangement of which the British public were in entire ignorance when Mr. Lloyd George made his speech. The Algeciras Act was dust and ashes. If any Power could complain of having been treated as of “no account in the Cabinet of nations” that Power was, surely, Germany. But Mr. Lloyd George, or those who drafted his speech for him, cleverly reversed the parts. What vital *British* interest was threatened? Absolutely none; unless the fact that the French and German Governments were discussing a settlement, and that hopes were entertained on both sides of the Vosges that the settlement might be a comprehensive one, leading to a general reconciliation such as had occurred in the case of England and France—unless it was a vital English interest that *that* happy consummation should not take place.

Mark the sequel to that speech. While that evening the Liberal editors were rubbing their eyes and wondering, or pretending to wonder, what it all meant; at any rate preserving silence, the *Times* editorial staff was engaged in explaining the significance of the Chancellor’s utterance to the world. The next morning, in a leader redolent with effusive praise of Mr. Lloyd George’s patriotism, the *Times* proceeded to rub salt into the wound and to surpass in outrageous violence even its performance on the 20th, comparing Germany to “Dick Turpin,” reiterating the legend (thenceforth credited by the public at large) of an intolerable German “demand” upon France,* suppressing all indication that the German Government had offered German territory in exchange for French and, of course, allowing it to be assumed that the claim to the Congo Free State had been put forward.

There is little more to add. The Chancellor’s speech was at first received in Germany with a sort of stupefaction; and as the comments of the *Times* and the campaign of the other Tory papers gradually sunk in, with an outburst of furious popular indignation. Naturally, as in 1905, the German Navy Leaguers redoubled their clamour for increased naval estimates, and the spirit of jingo-militarism received an enormous impetus. But I am only stating a truth known to every person competent to judge when I assert that the speech (and its interpretation in the *Times*) came upon *all classes* of opinion in Germany as a profound and utterly unexpected shock. It was like a sudden blow in the face. The most reasonable and pacific of Germans

* The actual words of the German Foreign Secretary, as quoted by the French Foreign Minister in the Chamber, had been: “Voici ce que nous demandons,” which means “That is what we *ask*”—not “demand”; if the German Foreign Secretary had meant “demand” he would have used quite a different word.

were as incensed as the jingoes. They regarded England's interference as utterly unjustifiable; indeed, as something astounding and incomprehensible.

German public opinion as a whole was not particularly interested in Morocco. But the Chancellor's speech converted Morocco into a matter of national honour. The average German argued thus: "This is a matter between ourselves and France. We have international law on our side. We are endeavouring to reach an accommodation with the French, and you thrust yourselves between us with threats, trying to pick a quarrel with us and to force us into a rupture with France."

Nor was German opinion likely to modify its view when Captain Faber made his sensational disclosures as to the British Government's intention to give military and naval aid to France in the event of a rupture occurring, a disclosure succeeded by similar statements from Lord Charles Beresford, Admiral Fremantle, and others. The substantial truth of these disclosures, which were denied at the time, were revealed to us in Sir Edward Grey's speech on August 2nd last and in the documents—now officially treated as authentic—discovered by the Germans in Brussels.

Nor yet was the publication by a couple of French newspapers on November 9 and 11 (1911) of the Secret Franco-British-Spanish Agreements of 1904 calculated to induce a different frame of mind in Germany.*

* Let me accentuate once again that these secret arrangements upon which the whole course of British diplomacy was based were withheld from the knowledge of the British *People* for seven years.

The Foreign Office had committed the nation (or so interpreted its commitments) to unreserved support of France in a policy at variance with an international Treaty—to which our signature and that of Germany were attached—and inevitably bound to produce acute Franco-German friction, possibly war. In other words, the British people had been pledged *behind their backs* to assist France in the attainment of an object to which she was not entitled, although its attainment must result in a Franco-German quarrel.

That result was clearly foreseen by the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Office authorized the "conversations" between the British and French military staffs: in other words, the Foreign Office sanctioned conferences between the military leaders of the two countries in order to prepare for the eventualities which were the logical outcome of the secret pledges to France. The details of an eventful plan of campaign were worked out, plunging the nation deeper and deeper into a maze of undertakings of which it knew nothing at all. As the *Spectator* declared, truly enough, last December:

"If Germany had decided to try to invade France by the direct route instead of by way of Belgium, we should still have been under a profound obligation to help France and Russia. It is useless to tell us that we were free to act as we pleased. . . . All our dealings with France—our sanction of her line of policy, our military conversations with her staff, our definite association with her acts abroad—had committed us to her cause as plainly as though we had entered into a binding alliance with her."

During the whole of those seven years the truth of its position was kept from this nation, and the entire Tory Press prepared public opinion in such a way that when the inevitable Franco-German climax arrived, Germany would, in popular estimation, be regarded not as protesting against the violation to her detriment of an international Treaty, but as the wanton disturber of the peace of Europe. That war did not eventuate when the climax arrived was due in large measure, so the French Yellow Book tells us, to the German Emperor.

And the astounding thing is that the new defunct Government which was pursuing this foreign policy in secret was basing its material defence of that policy on an expeditionary force of 160,000 men! For a policy which committed us to the material support of France in a Franco-German war was a policy which committed us to Armageddon: there could be no localization of the long-threaten-

The Franco-German negotiations concluded in a treaty signed on November 9, 1911. Under that treaty Germany recognised a French Protectorate over Morocco subject to detailed and meticulous safeguards, ensuring the "open door" for the commercial and industrial enterprises of all nations—thereby rendering British commerce a service, too; receiving in exchange a territorial area in the French Congo, aggregating some 107,270 square miles, and ceding to France 6,450 square miles of German territory in the Upper Cameroons.

But between England and Germany a new chapter had been opened, a chapter of capital importance, creative of the tragedy which has ended in "Armageddon."

E. D. MOREL.

ing European conflict if once it broke out. Thus the nation, being committed to this policy, was also being committed to its effects—national militarism. The situation is tersely described in the following passage in the quarterly review, *The Candid*, for May of this year: "The point and the appalling significance of the story lies in the proof it affords that we live under a political system which leaves the greatest of all issues in the absolutely uncontrolled hands of one or two or three, acting secretly, and without the knowledge of what they are doing being shared by any of those on whom the real burden must fall, or even by their own most confidential and trusting colleagues." For the wisdom of the many we have substituted the conspiracy of the few." That situation still exists.—E. D. M.

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